



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Fairfax-Falls Church CSB Wellness and Health Promotion are training our County workforce and our community members in Mental Health First Aid.

One in five Americans lives with a mental health problem each year. Yet far too many – up to two-thirds – go without treatment. Just as CPR training helps a layperson without medical training assist an individual following a heart attack, **Mental Health First Aid** training helps a layperson assist someone developing or experiencing a mental health problem or crisis.

The **Mental Health First Aid** (MHFA) program expands knowledge of mental illnesses and their treatments, increases the services provided and reduces overall stigma by enriching our County workforce and community member's "mental health literacy." This capacity-building effort supports the CSB's mission and serves to strengthen our community.

MHFA outcomes:

- Improves people's mental health,
- Increases understanding of mental health issues and treatments,
- Connects more people with care,
- Reduces stigma associated with mental illnesses, and
- Increases understanding of the impact mental illnesses have on a person, their family and communities.

The interactive 8-hour certification program introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact and overviews common treatments.

Specifically, MHFA participants learn:

- Potential risk factors and warning signs for mental health problems, including: depression, anxiety/trauma, psychosis, substance use disorders, and self-injury
- An understanding of the prevalence of various mental health disorders in the U.S. and the need for reduced stigma in their communities
- A 5-step action plan to help the individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional care
- The evidence-based professional, peer, social, and self-help resources available to help someone with a mental health problem.

Register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/events/mental-health-first-aid.htm

Questions? Contact Edgar Ayala at 703-383-8430 or edgar.ayala@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Over

Mental Health First Aid

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)?

MHFA is an 8-hour training course designed to give members of the public key skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

Is there evidence to support the effectiveness of the program?

Yes there is strong evidence of outcomes. MHFA USA is listed in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. Published studies show that individuals trained in the program: Grow their knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illnesses and addictions and increase their confidence in and likelihood to help an individual in distress. Visit <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/about/community-impact/> for more information.

How many days does it take to complete the 8 hour Mental Health First Aid program?

It is often conducted as a two-day seminar (4.5 hours each day), two half-day events spaced over a short period of time. A one day course (9.5 hours) is also an option.

Can I set up a customized MHFA class specifically for my job, organization, church etc.?

Yes! Visit our MHFA page to learn how to request a custom class:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/events/mental-health-first-aid.htm>

How many participants are needed to hold a class?

A minimum of 10 participants are needed to schedule a class and a maximum of 25.

What types of crisis interventions are covered?

Trainees are taught how to apply the 5-step strategy in situations such as helping someone through a panic attack, engaging with someone who may be suicidal, or assisting an individual who has overdosed. Mental Health First Aid training provides the opportunity to practice the intervention strategy rather than to just learn about it. This simple experience can make it easier to actually apply the knowledge in a real-life situation.

Who should take a Mental Health First Aid course?

Mental Health First Aid is intended for a variety of audiences: friends and family of individuals with mental illness or addiction, public safety, businesses and primary care workers, school and college leadership, faith communities, or anyone interested in learning more about mental illness and addiction. Not sure? Just ask us!

What does it cost to take the class?

The class fee is \$25 which covers materials. Note: Fairfax County Government employees are sponsored by the LiveWell Employee Wellness Program which pays the fee.

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities.

To request this information in an alternate format, call 703-324-7000, TTY 711.